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ABSTRACT

This pamphlet on effective public relations (p.r.) is the thirteenth of 16 in a series to provide leaders in adult activities with sound introductory material to give pratical help in using a method of adult education or working in a particular area. Its objective is to help leaders achieve better relations with all their publics. Twelve articles and how-tos are included. The introduction illustrates what a p.r. program can accomplish. "Your Public Image" focuses on the publics from whom organizations get information on their images. Getting the support of everyone in the organization for the p.r. program is discussed in "Public Relations at Home." "Riding the Established Channels" looks at selecting useful channels of communication. "Choose Your P.R. Weapons" describes advantages and disadvantages of different channels of communications, costs, and choosing p.r. help. Suggestions for getting audience attention in p.r. releases are presented in "Twelve Ways to Waylay the Wary Reader." "What's Your Type?" gives hints on producing effective printed matter on a limited budget. Effective photographs are the topic of "6000 Vivid Words," while "Slides Tell Our Story" relates the story of producing a film slide show about a citizen organization. "Public Relations or Propaganda" and "Counterattack" discuss propaganda strategies and p.r. to counteract them. The final chapter is a "Checklist for P.R. Planners." (YLB)

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EFFECTIVE PUBLIC RELATIONS

Presenting a modern approach to achieving better relations with all your publics, with such practical aids as:

- Using your files
- Rating your own organization
- Choosing your P.R. weapons
- Testing your communications
- Choosing type and pictures
- Handling criticism
- Checklist for planning

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Adult Education Association of the U.S.A.

Leadership Pamphlets are prepared and distributed by the Adult Education Association of the U.S.A. Each pamphlet provides leaders in adult activities with sound introductory material which can give practical help in using an important method of adult education or working in a particular area with insight and skill.

Pamphlets in this series are:

P1 —How to Lead Discussions
P2 —Planning Better Programs
P3 —Taking Action in the Community
P4 —Understanding How Groups Work
P5 —How to Teach Adults
P6 —How to Use Role Playing
P7 —Supervision and Consultation
P8 —Training Group Leaders
P9 —Conducting Workshops and Institutes
P10—Working with Volunteers
P11—Conferences that Work
P12—Getting and Keeping Members
P13—Effective Public Relations
P14—Better Boards and Committees
P15—Streamlining Parliamentary Procedure
P16—Training in Human Relations

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction 2
By Thomas L. Cotton, *The Thomas L. Cotton Associates*

Your Public Image 5
By Robert O. Carlson, *Standard Oil Company of New Jersey*

Public Relations at Home 9
By John L. Fortson, *Connecticut Association for Mental Health*

Riding the Established Channels 13
By William D. Boutwell, *Scholastic Magazines*

Choose Your P.R. Weapons 18
By John L. Fortson

Twelve Ways to Waylay the Wary Reader . . . 21
By William D. Boutwell

What's Your Type? 25
By P. Carl Tuttle, *Creative Graphics*

6,000 Vivid Words 28

Slides Tell Our Story 30
By Bettie Sarchet, *formerly University of Chicago*

Public Relations or Propaganda 35
By Alfred McClung Lee, *Brooklyn College*

Counterattack 41
By George H. Freyermuth, *Standard Oil Company of New Jersey*

Checklist for P.R. Planners 46
By Sallie E. Bright, *National Publicity Council for Health and Welfare Services*

INTRODUCTION

ARE you worried about your public relations? I have a friend who is—or was. Jim is a well educated chap, an M.A. if I'm not mistaken. He works at industrial relations in a fair-sized corporation. The executives in his plant have been told by the boss that public relations is an important activity for which every employee is responsible. It is the mode to get into community activities. It will advance the public relations of his firm and it might bring *him* promotion.

So Jim is worried about public relations although as a volunteer he has committee jobs in two different social agencies and is treasurer of a civic group. The other day he said to me,

"Tom, you're in this business of public relations and I'd like to ask you some questions. For example, if the boss at the plant thinks our outfit needs public relations, wouldn't you say that these so-called voluntary organizations *are sick for it?*"

This idea had worried me also. "Jim," I said, "what do you think you and the other leaders in this community ought to do about it?"

"That's what bothers me, Tom. If it's to be an integral part of my work, I have to see its relation to what I'm trying to do and what I know how to do.

"On my daily job I have to use human relations principles, tools, and techniques. I know how to deal with people, how to get a lagging shift up to quota, how to get a section or gang of workers to face a change from one type of work to another with a minimum loss of momentum. Conference leadership and group work in the social agency don't worry me. I can get people aroused, get them to work together to accomplish something, but this public relations business stumps me. It's like black magic, a mysterious sort of thing."

Jim stopped to light his pipe and I got in.

"Look, Jim," I said, "you're making a simple thing complex, even esoteric. In public relations we

use the same human relations principles you have found so effective. When dealing with small groups we use many of the same tools and techniques. However, when it becomes necessary to create in the minds of the public at large a distinctive image of an enterprise, agency or organization and the atmosphere in which it can prosper, we must use tools possibly unfamiliar to you. Public relations work should be a mystery to no one and especially not to leaders skilled in human relations."

"Tell me more," said Jim.

"Well, you proceed from the known to the unknown as in teaching. You do opinion research to find out what image people have in their minds of your enterprise, how they make up their minds about it and communicate with it.

"From these data you begin to plan your strategy and your tactics. In your work with committees and groups, each person having a stake wants to have a say in the planning and strategy and program. Participation is a key word in public relations as well as internal relations. The success of the program of public relations often depends on how far you can press back to the grass roots for citizen involvement. The more people you can involve in creating an image or an atmosphere the more quickly it can be done and the longer it lasts."

Jim nodded. "Now tell me this, Tom. I've found that I have to do a lot of reading in the cial sciences to keep up with my job. Do you find that this is helpful in public relations work?"

"Sure thing. Take the psychological concept that all behavior is caused. We use this especially when a critical public relations situation arises such as, for example, an attack on the enterprise we are serving. We know that it has a cause and we must do a lot of listening to identify it. Once the cause is known, we work to eliminate it. Facts alone will not always elim-

inate hostility, thus the frequent use of the human interest story to bring emotion into play.

"Perhaps your sense of mystery stems from the use we must make of symbols, semantics, opinion sampling, mass media and all channels of communication. The choice and use of a good propaganda line or headline story, the use of visual aids and gimmicks; these things are of comparatively recent origin. However, once you use them regularly they become as familiar to you as the old garden hoe. Take this one example of the sort of tools we use: in public relations work we deal among other things with news stories. To be news, each story must meet at least one of three tests: (1) is it factual? (2) is it about something in the public interest? (3) is it of human interest? Often we create activities to carry out the purposes of the organization from which news stories will flow. As a leader you know how to create such activities. It's really a part of your present work. Public relations is a focus on an essential aspect of everything you're trying to do."

Jim smiled. "You're selling me on it, Tom."

This gave me a lead into something I'd wanted to say.

"Selling you legitimately, I hope. Don't forget what you have learned on your job, namely, that people don't like to be manipulated or bamboozled. Things put over don't stay put. As Emerson said, 'The ends preexist in the means.' So don't forget good taste, candor and honesty in public relations work."

The conversation went on, and when Jim finally left I think he knew in a general way what a public relations program aims to accomplish. I think he knew, too, that public relations are something that every organization inevitably "has," not primarily something that a special public relations profession "does."

your public image

IF WE want to know what we look like, we use a mirror. So, too, if we want to know how we look to our publics, we have to use techniques which will give us something like an accurate picture. Here is where research can help.

Now, most organizations have two important publics from which they need to get information: (1) the people they serve and (2) the people who support the organization. The "general public" is usually appealed to either as potential customers or as potential supporters of agency activities or both.

Relationships must be established with these publics, but sometimes different plans are needed for each. We may wish those we serve to see our agency or organization differently from the way it is seen by those who support it.

How well do each of our publics know our organization? What is the image they have of our agency?

We may be fairly certain that some judgments of any organization made by the public are irrational or at least superficial. People may judge our group by the way its office is arranged or decorated, or by the way the receptionist answers the telephone. It may be that they expect different kinds of agencies to maintain quite different "styles of living." Judgments may be made from the letterhead or on the basis of whether the officers of the organization drink in public. These images must not be discounted, even if they seem remote or unreasonable.

However irrational or rational the pictures are which people have of the organization, it is important to know what those images are. If we know, we have a point of attack for changing the public relations. We can try to give people images which more closely resemble those we have of ourselves and wish others to share, and we can

supply them with information to build the images.

Where do we turn for such information? Some of it may be as near as the file cabinet and desk drawers in the office. Let us look first at how this natural data, the by-product of the day-to-day operation of the agency, can be converted into useful research information.

INFORMAL DATA IN YOUR FILES

1. Newspaper and radio accounts of your organization:

How frequently has the press reported on your group? Which aspects of your activities do they stress—the unique or the routine? Is the organization as a whole mentioned or are the stories only in terms of individuals and officers of the group? Are accounts usually favorable or unfavorable?

2. Requests for information:

What services are you most frequently called on to provide? Which ones are seldom called for? Are the requests irrelevant to your purposes and services?

3. Recruitment of personnel:

What kinds of skills and training do applicants for work in your group possess? If your group depends on voluntary workers, do they come from any special strata of society? Does membership in your group carry with it an increase in prestige for the members?

4. Relations with other community organizations:

Does your group receive requests from other organizations or agencies in the community? Are they requests for advice and counsel, money and support, or services? Do these requests suggest cooperative action with other agencies?

With these ideas in mind the newspaper clipping file, the correspondence file, and meeting records become important sources for information. At first it may be hard to see how these materials might produce the information. But as you read a letter from an outsider try to look between the lines and ask yourself, "What picture did he have of us when he wrote this?" Hints may come from the way he words his sentences, the kinds of requests he makes.

If the information is to be profitable, one must not

make judgments about the material which is being examined; he must be willing to pursue the clues until they fit into some meaningful picture. This takes time, thought, and analysis.

Many times an agency or organization lacks staff time for this job. Here is a point at which volunteer help might be enlisted. The sympathetic volunteer may do a better analysis, and be more helpful to a staff person who is himself so directly related to the agency's activities.

What are some advantages in using this informal data? For one thing, it is readily available. It may be less expensive since staff or volunteer time is used to do much of the tabulating and analysis. More important, perhaps, is the fact that the information is "real." It may be more readily understood by the staff or members of the organization. Finally, and most significant in the long run, as the staff learn how to analyze these everyday records they are likely to increase in their sensitivity to public-relations problems.

Some difficulties in carrying through this method may be the lack of staff or volunteer time. The method also may lend itself to misinterpretations as, unless care is taken, it may be difficult for staff people to become sufficiently objective to make good use of the data. These kinds of records may be somewhat one-sided. They cannot give information about the picture of the agency which is held by people who have had no contact with it.

USING THE OUTSIDE SPECIALIST

Sometimes, if a group has resources available and is strongly concerned about the problem, it is more profitable to bring in a research specialist to serve as a consultant or technician in ways of getting the most accurate data from the respective publics. These experts can help adapt research techniques to the particular needs of your organization. They may wish to carry out brief exploratory studies through some intensive interviews before setting up the larger public-opinion type poll.

If there are adequate finances, a research specialist may bring in his own staff to set up the research methods and collect the data which are needed. There will still

be need for extensive consultation with the organization's staff and members if the research findings are to be worthwhile.

Although this is likely to be the most expensive method of getting research data, it is not necessarily superior to other research methods. The purpose of research, in this case, is to get information which will help the organization *to take action* to improve its public relations. This implies that some changes will be required in the operation of the organization. The research data will give some ideas about which changes will improve these relationships.

Often research findings which are developed by outside agencies may be put on the shelf and have little effect upon the day-to-day operations; no real changes are accomplished. The people concerned often feel that the findings are not realistic for their situation; they have not had a real opportunity to understand, both intellectually and emotionally, what the findings mean and what changes are necessary in their present ways of doing things.

If there is staff or volunteer help available, a research consultant may be called in to lend his technical skills to the development of the questionnaires or interviews, and train the people who will use them. He can also be most helpful in setting up tabulation and analysis procedures, and in helping interpret the data. If he is able to work as a consultant the responsibility for the actual study remains within the organization itself. The members who participate in the research activity often feel greatly identified with the findings and will work actively to see that they are carried into effect.

No matter what approach is taken to the development of information about the state of the public relations of the organization, there is likely to be some uneasiness developing within the staff or membership. Fact finding often suggests that something is wrong. We may fear that the facts which turn up may put us in a less favorable light. Time given to discussing the purposes and methods of the research and its intended uses and usefulness will be well spent in helping the organization make the changes which may be necessary.

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PUBLIC RELATIONS "AT HOME"

AN army pilot engaged in ferrying supplies across the Atlantic in World War II became concerned about the careless way his ground crew loaded the plane. Frequently the rubber life rafts and other equipment would be left out or covered over with cargo.

The pilot hit upon this solution: An order was issued declaring that because of a shortage of air crewmen, members of the ground crew would have to stand ready to make the trans-Atlantic flight on a moment's notice. . . .

With their lives at stake, the ground crew saw to it that the safety equipment was always in its proper place.

A public relations man has this much in common with the pilot: he needs to secure participation in a vital common effort. It is his responsibility to enlist the help of everybody in the organization in the p.r. program.

Look at it this way: in public relations our opinion of an organization is formed not only by the way it appears in public or by the design of its printed materials, but also by what we feel to be its competence and quality, and by the attitudes it has toward the people it serves.

Actually, we may make judgments of an organization on the basis of a few observations about the character of its home office. What does the place "feel" like to someone

who has just walked in? Do the people working there seem happy? Do they appear to know what they're doing? Do they care whether the visitor receives courteous and competent attention? The answers to such questions are more than a measure of good manners; they provide clues to the real character of the organization.

Since its real character plays an important part in creating its public image, it follows that everyone involved in the organization—whether chief executive, receptionist, professional worker, publicity writer, or volunteer—helps make public relations, good or bad. It becomes a particular responsibility of the public relations director to show these others how they can help.

How does he do this? Well, let's look first at how he handles the organization's outside interests. Good publicity may be said to occur when the public relations man knows what activities of an organization contain the news or human interest ingredients which an editor must have for his readers. The p.r. man, functioning as communicator and interpreter between his organization and the press, must relate the publicity needs of his organization to the reader-interest needs of the editor. To produce a good publicity story he must first develop a good *news* story to meet the editor's specifications.

He enhances relations with other community agencies and groups in the same way—by finding and developing areas of mutual concern. If he wants an effective library display, for instance, he designs one that meets the librarian's requirements at the same time it tells his organization's story. If he wants physicians to place leaflets in their waiting rooms, he considers first what these physicians would like to have said to their patients. In the same way he secures the cooperation of groups such as teachers, clergymen, educators, and businessmen.

And now, again, we've stated the cardinal principle of public relations—collaboration. What a public relations man does is to reach out and bring others into the creative process of working together on problems of mutual concern.

This is equally true of public relations "at home." Within his own organization the p.r. man functions as communicator and interpreter between the separate parts, professions, and personalities. He might be said to be the

orchestrator blending these different skills to achieve maximum results in making the public image of his organization as positive and favorable as possible. In this role he must not only understand his own job as it relates to the work of his colleagues, but must also have the tact and patience to appreciate their position, and interpret to them their own particular public relations responsibilities.

A professional worker's training and experience, for example, has taught him a particular way of going about his work. His first concern will always be to do a good job of professional service. For one thing, he achieves recognition and advancement according to his ability in his field, and not by whether his activities are good grist for the mill of public opinion.

In the same way, a fund raiser is charged with the definite responsibility for getting money. So he is likely to be more concerned with the fund-raising potential of an activity than, say, with whether this activity jibes with what the professional worker is trying to do.

So then, from his go-between position, the public-relations man endeavors to convince the professional worker that he can work most effectively when the organization is on a sound financial footing. In a like manner he seeks to give the fund raiser a better understanding of the essential purposes of the organization, so that money will not be solicited at the cost of public misunderstanding.

Whether working "at home," or building up the organization's "outside" interests, the p.r. man finds ways of helping the other fellow do *his* job better. In so doing he accomplishes his own public relations purpose.

HOW'S YOUR HOUSEKEEPING?

It is sometimes quite difficult to judge accurately a situation that is familiar. Here is a checklist to help in rating your own organization.

Better still, you might want to hand this checklist to your public relations committee and suggest that it be made a committee project. Ask a number of persons relatively unfamiliar with the organization to visit the office, talk to the staff, and record their impressions. By getting your public relations committee and these individuals to make the test, you bring them actively into

the creative process of re-thinking the policies and practices of your organization.

A tally of better than 100 is good. Below 85—you'd better get to work!

	Rarely		Occasionally		Usually		Always
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.	Office visitors are received pleasantly.						
2.	Reception room is attractive and trim.						
3.	Visitors' needs are handled efficiently.						
4.	People working about the place seem happy.						
5.	The telephone is answered courteously.						
6.	Requests to return telephone calls are honored as promptly as practicable.						
7.	Correspondence is answered or acknowledged with a minimum of delay. (Under 2 days; same day if possible.)						
8.	Letters show that thought and personal attention have gone into their preparation.						
9.	Publications say: "We know where we're going."						
10.	"Thank you" notes go regularly to persons who do special jobs, or unusually good work, or write favorable editorials, etc.						
11.	Committee members say they enjoy meetings.						
12.	Meetings begin and end on time.						
13.	Meetings show careful advance planning.						
14.	Staff conferences are held when needed.						
15.	Employees feel free to express their ideas fully.						
16.	Staff and board have joint conferences when needed.						
17.	Views are regularly brought in from the outside community.						

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Riding the Established Channels

What are the channels for your messages? Which can be most useful?

You will immediately think of the local newspapers, radio station, and, if the service has reached your community, television. Is this all? What about the rest of the local press? Are there weeklies? Are there specialized periodicals? The P.T.A. or church or labor periodicals? Newsletters or the high school newspaper? And what about other handy "rocks" on which to display messages —store windows, bulletin boards, movie trailers, printed programs, etc?

Not all the channels will be equally effective. For maximum coverage of your public, choose the newspaper. It continues to talk to more people regularly than any other medium. A study in Indiana found that "all farmers subscribed to some newspaper. They spent one hour a day reading the paper, on the average. Over 94 per cent read the county agent's weekly newsnotes." In North Carolina a comparable study report concludes, "Daily newspapers were subscribed to by 86 per cent of the homemakers, and weekly or semiweekly papers by 65 per cent." In cities the ubiquitous newspaper rolls up even more impressive statistics.

Penetration

"Penetration" is a word you will want to toss around when you sit down with the public relations committee to program your campaign. Advertising agencies and public relations consultants frequently use the term to assess the degree to which their message penetrates to the audience which they desire to reach and move. To penetrate an audience an ad director or p.r. man will rarely trust the burden to a single media. For a major cam-

paign, money will be appropriated for newspaper and mass magazine advertising, for television or radio, for display advertising, for merchandising in store windows, for trade magazine advertising, and perhaps, on nice days, skywriting. Through many channels the message impinges on minds of potential buyers.

What thinking dictates the approval of elaborate campaigns using multiple machines? At least two deep-seated convictions: one, that people divide themselves into different audiences which must be reached by the communication channels of their preference; two, that the low efficiency of any medium requires repetition to insure that the message *penetrates* by one means or another to the audience.

Let me be specific. You read the newspaper, but how much of the newspaper do you read? About three per cent, some investigators say. You also read about three per cent of your favorite magazines. In radio and television the "mortality rate" of attention runs even higher. Of 10,000 home owners with sets, perhaps 1,000 will turn them on at a given evening hour. If three or four stations serve the community, the number of viewers to one of the programs may be no more than 250 persons. So that means that 97.5 per cent of home owners never had a chance to hear the message. And who can be sure that the 250 who tuned in were actually paying attention?

Suppose you issue a news release that becomes a three-inch story in the local paper, how many will happen to read it? "Penetration" becomes a problem for the local campaign as well as the national. As you make plans, decide how many of the local channels of communication you will attempt to use. And how many times.

Local Channels

How you use local channels may be more important than the number of channels you employ.

Recently a nurse told me what was done to reactivate a nurses' association in a Louisiana city. The small nucleus group named two nurses on a public relations committee —both very pretty girls, I might add. Soon thereafter the two girls paid a visit to the editor of the leading news-

paper. Instead of asking for a story they told him of the plan to build up the nurses' organization. He questioned them about the meetings planned, guest speakers scheduled, and other activities. This interview laid the basis not for one story, but a succession of stories. The girls learned the kind of news the paper wanted and established a contact which insured a warm welcome for the news of their organization.

In this account there's more than one lesson. Sending two pretty girls on a p.r. assignment is the best possible strategy. Inviting and securing the advice of an expert—in this case the editor—on a long range program may give your visit an enduring value.

It is equally important to note what did not happen in this instance, but might have. Importuned by a local organization, the editor could have said, "A fine project. It certainly deserves the support of the community. We'll have an editorial on it."

The editorial page is the least read section of most newspapers. And this type of editorial—the pat-on-the-back praise of a local organization—will be read, in the main, by members who are already sold on the organization's program and merits. Far better off were the two nurses who won space for their "stories" in the news columns.

Let Experts Help You

You can go to the manager of your local radio station and ask for 15 minutes on the air. He is likely to say "yes." Such a program will look well on his report of public service when he applies to the FCC for renewal of the station's license. Of course, he may place your program in the schedule at a time when few will be listening.

If, instead of asking for time, you present to the station manager your overall public relations aim, he may come up with ideas that will prove more effective and easier to execute. Does the station have a disc jockey or commentator who enjoys local favor and confidence? If so, your message handled by him will reach more ears. Can you accomplish anything with 30-second announcements? Often the local station will sandwich public service announcements into its regularly scheduled programs.

Two points are worth remembering: (1) where possible use the best-established channels to the eyes and ears of the people you expect to reach; (2) beg, borrow, and otherwise latch on to the professional advice of those whose business it is to know what the public wants to read and hear and how best to manage the communication problems.

Many a smart organization appoints a local reporter or broadcaster, or both, to its public relations committee. Or, if it can afford to, hires such service. Local salaries for reporters and broadcasters are such that an additional fee, even though it be small, will usually be welcome.

Let "National" Help You

The two nurses mentioned above also turned to another source of assistance often available if your local enterprise relates itself to some national organization. From "national" they received guidance and practical aids for their local public relations programs. These consisted of a handbook containing public relations suggestions, some radio scripts which could be adapted for local production, and basic news releases.

Write to headquarters to find out what is available. You may be offered literature, available in quantity, which can be imprinted with your local address or message. Some national organizations supply their "locals" with scripts, recordings, or prefabricated radio plugs. Even though you insist on composing your own p.r. aids, you may learn from those prepared by experts.

For campaigns, the materials supplied from national headquarters can be almost overwhelming. American Education Week, sponsored by the NEA (National Education Association) stands as an example. It requires a small directory to list the wide variety of aids offered to the busy school executive. Materials for local celebrations of American Education Week range from movie trailers to preprinted invitations to parents, from four-color posters to sermon themes, and a message from the president of the United States. These multi-p.r. services pay off.

When You Have To: Do It Yourself

No matter how generous is your national organization or the local newspaper, you will ultimately find it

necessary to prepare some of your own public relations materials. Here's one technique that worked in a Long Island suburb. Seeking to establish closer relations with parents and promote night classes, the school board inaugurated a biweekly newsletter. To prepare the issues the board released three teachers for part of the day and invited three parents to work with them.

The teachers came to the editorial session with ideas about curriculum changes they considered of prime importance. When the parents exchanged "so what" glances, out went the teachers' pet ideas. Into the issue, instead, came reports that touched parent interests. The newsletter became a regular thing. If the "copy" went over the heads of parents, the teachers were sure to hear about it; the copy would be rewritten. This joint effort promoted a newsletter that is eagerly read because it is adapted to its community audience. An effective piece of communication by amateurs!

One open-sesame to many local channels of communication is the photograph—the good usable photograph. You don't need a photographic laboratory. You do need an imaginative photographer, plenty of film and flash bulbs, and a well-indexed file of photographs complete with adequate legends. You can not begin to imagine the variety of uses to which good photographs charged with human interest will be put.

Above all other channels thus far mentioned, some authorities rank one other—word of mouth publicity. Some public utilities, realizing that the man who reads the meter represents them to the public, select and train meter readers for public relations duties. One national study of movie goers reported that 34 per cent of those 35 years and older got first impressions of films by word of mouth. No other source rated higher. With young people "word of mouth" ranked almost on par with magazines and trailers.

One last word. Your public relations program should not exceed the capacity of your staff. Which may be you. No matter how important "penetration" may be, it can't be more important that health and happiness. More reason for you to be selective, choosing those channels that yield the largest public relations values for the smallest amount of effort.

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Choose Your P. R. Weapons

Individual "Publics"

Personal Conference. The most effective of all —if you are good in person-to-person situations.

Personal Letter. The "selling" potential of the personal letter is too often neglected. Let no opportunity pass for writing a note to congratulate a colleague on a new achievement, to assure an absent board member he was missed, to thank a volunteer for service well done, or thank an editor for a good story.

Telephone. More effective than a letter as a last-minute reminder or to get immediate action. But not good unless the action desired is clear-cut. In a dire emergency, better than letters for getting people to do what they might prefer not to! (A telephone request is harder to dodge, but be sure to put the bargain in writing with a follow-up letter.)

Advantage: These direct, personal media are the only ones that provide full 2-way communication with the return signal equal in strength to the out-going signal. Use these media if you want to be sure to nail a chairman or cinch a contribution. These are the *only* media to use for recruiting key leaders or raising large money.

Disadvantage: Cost is high in time invested, in proportion to the number of individuals reached. (Although cost is low in relation to effective results.)

Remarks: Importance of these channels of communication is often overlooked by people awed by the magic of press, radio and TV.

are we touching all the bases?

Small Group "Publics"

Newsletters . . . Annual Reports . . . Committee Meetings. Indispensable tools for a successful program of internal public relations—for building strength and cohesion within the "family."

Articles in professional or trade journals . . . Talks before conventions and special groups . . . Special memoranda . . . Small group meetings (15-25). These are the channels through which your organization can be in effective contact with other special-interest groups in the community.

Remarks: In dealing with these small group "publics" we are in direct communication with homogeneous groups where a high degree of intimacy may still be achieved, i.e.: The contact is much more direct than with the "mass publics" below. The return signal, although not as strong as the outgoing signal, is still enough to provide the opportunity for 2-way communication.

When p.r. staff time and funds are limited, best results are frequently achieved by concentrating in this "small public" area where costs are lowest in relation to effectiveness of results. In most non-profit organizations with successful public relations programs, a large proportion of energy is concentrated in this field.

Mass "Publics"

Large meetings . . . Press . . . Radio . . . TV . . . Films . . . Exhibits and Posters

Advantage: The largest possible audience for the effort involved.

Disadvantage: Impact on the individual is the weakest of any media at our disposal. Mass communications are best used in a supportive role; they cannot be relied on .

to "make a sale" in raising funds or in putting over a program. Mass media pave the way for more direct, personal follow-through.

Mass media costs can be high, and the results uncertain and intangible.

How to Beat the High Cost of Mass Media

Press: An executive without news training can develop his own "nose for news" by studying the papers and by cultivating friendships among reporters. Often a volunteer or part-time publicity writer may be obtained for relatively little expense.

Ready-made audiences: Special newspaper columns and departments, and special radio and TV programs appeal to specific audiences (women, music lovers, cooks, nationality groups, etc.) These features and programs are usually quite accessible for anyone with an interesting story to tell—and they offer ready-made audiences for what you have to say.

Who Will You Get to Do the Job?

Outside Agency? For general public relations service, the fees of commercial agencies are usually too steep for the budgets of most non-profit agencies. But frequently a specific job can be done most economically when "farmed out" to a good service outfit. (The making of films, the taking of photographs, the designing of printed materials, the construction of exhibits.)

Full-time Staff? This is the best way if you can afford it.

Part-time Staff? Better a half-loaf than none. Frequently you can find a craftsman who is interested in your cause and desirous of picking up a few extra dollars in return for first-rate work as a reporter; photographer, artist, advertising or promotion writer, radio script writer. (Sometimes the girls who quit jobs to marry are available for part-time assignments.)

Volunteer? Naturally, if they are dependable. *and* capable. Beware of the zealous but incompetent amateur. Sources of volunteer p.r. help: Display advertising departments of retail stores; university classes; schools of journalism; community drama groups; art schools.

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TWELVE WAYS TO WAYLAY THE WARY READER

"Well I'll be damned," said the Countess, crossing her legs and fixing her garter . . .

MAYBE you remember that classical first line of the freshman theme. The line had little to do with the substance of the theme. It did serve the purpose of jolting the reader into attention.

Then there's the story about the Arkansas farmer who bought a mule. It was a strong, healthy mule, but it refused to work. The farmer tried all the usual methods, including the time-honored one of beating him over the head with a club. No results.

The mule seller came by. "You don't know how to handle him. Put down the club; he's been beat so much he ignores it. Now watch and I'll show you."

The mule seller bent and pinched off a daisy, approached the mule and started tickling him under the jaw.

"How's that going to make him work?" the farmer wanted to know.

"Don't hurry me," the mule seller said. "This is just to get his attention; it's something he doesn't expect."

Both the mule seller and the freshman were right. Whether you are writing a news release or radio script or a pamphlet, first you've got to get attention from what must certainly seem to you to be an apathetic, stubborn, mulish audience. You may want to build a fire under your audience, or shock it, or assault it with sweet titillation. The choice is yours. But it is the first step.

What are the other steps? How do you get action from an audience?

Any man who tells you he knows for certain ought to be investigated by the Better Business Bureau for practicing fraud. But here are a few questions to apply to any attempt to communicate in any way to any audience:

1. ***Does the message retain attention?*** Two ways to hold it are ways I'm now using: (1) Use question marks. (2) Use numbers. Readers feel duty-bound to plough through all the numbers IF you don't use too many. Listen to good yarn spinners. Borrow their devices also.

2. ***Does it have unity?*** Good old unity! There's more than one kind. There's the logical unity of the prescription for a good sermon: "Tell 'em what you are going to tell 'em; then tell 'em; then tell 'em what you told them." Then there's dramatic unity achieved through suspense and climax. One easy time-tested way to insure unity: string your story on a human life. On the thread of a life you can hang the oddest collection of items, as every novelist knows.

3. ***Does it have coherence?*** Ever play the childhood game of crack-the-whip? Remember how the players held the line intact as long as fingers clasped fingers? When the line broke: chaos. So with your prose: as long as sentences clasp fingers with sentences (with words like "so", "when", and pronouns), and paragraphs clasp paragraphs, and ideas clasp ideas, then your message will unfurl like a long, blacksnake whip.

4. ***Is it concise?*** A chap I know claims you can remove every fifth word from most prose and not de-

stroy meaning. All copy can be cut. The Bible uses fewer than 500 words to describe the creation.

5. ***Do you have a clincher?*** Direct mail people call it "sell." Speakers call it "summary." Call it what you will, does your communication move either minds, bodies or pocketbooks? Or all three?

6. ***Is there conflict?*** I know that nice people often find the conflicts on newspaper front pages slightly vulgar and revolting. But who will not pause to watch a dog fight? Or almost any kind of fight? No social or educational agency has the right to exist unless it engages in a fight—against ignorance, cruelty to animals, disease, or—well, you name it *and* use it.

7. ***Is it timely?*** A Chicago ad agency discovered through expensive research what common sense should have told it: that 7:30 p.m. is not good air-time to advertise food. Who has an appetite after a good dinner? Your message requires "timing" for best reception; skillful angling to current or persistent interests. Health, for example, is a persistent interest.

8. ***Does your audience join you?*** Or do you talk at them and bore the socks off them? Simplest participation device is the question. Put your audience to work. The *more* you require of *their* knowledge and *their* imagination, the *more* they will love you.

9. ***What kind of sentences?*** Short. Keep your average to about 17 words for easy reading.

10. ***What kind of verbs?*** Verbs that put wheels under your nouns. Simple present or past tense. "Is" rolls no nouns; it seesaws. The dictionary gives 57 definitions of "make." You take your choice.

11. ***What kind of words?*** Avoid "disestablishmentarianism" and other words built like old New England farm houses with too many additions of prefixes and suffixes. Avoid words your audience finds empty-faced because they lack meaning, two-faced with alternate meaning, defaced from overuse.

12. ***What is your reader's picture of you?*** Does he see you as a statistician serving cold facts? A preacher? A long-winded bore? Or a friend who drops in for a friendly, informal chat? American prose tends toward a democratic "you-to-you" style.

I could add more hallmarks of effective communication; but most persons find difficulty remembering the Ten Commandments, so why should anyone be expected to keep in mind as many as 12 points for communicating with audiences? Why not type the items in italics on a small, pocket-size checklist card? Then season with other spices of advice picked up along the way. No one can give you a precise recipe for writing. When you sit down to a typewriter you are the cook.

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What's ♦ EDEN LIGHT

your ♦ TEMPO LIGHT ITALIC

KARNAK LIGHT ♦ # type?

Hints on producing effective printed matter on a limited budget.

◆ ***BODONI BOLD ITALIC***

BODONI BOOK ◆

Organizations which work on a restricted publications budget face the problem of producing materials effective enough to compete with the larger national organizations whose funds allow them to hire top creative talent. We'd like to offer here some suggestions calculated to insure greater reader attraction for those organizations which are designing their own materials.

Get acquainted with good design.

Most publications directors have a constant stream of promotional materials crossing their desks each day. A good method of improving your own ability to analyze

25

design is to save those pieces which capture your interest at first glance. After a couple of months place those selected before you, and see if you still like them. Try then to analyze the factors that influenced your choice. By doing this every month or two you will begin to notice such things as new ways of handling photographs along with the text, new styles of type, and new folding and binding methods.

Because of its competitive nature commercial advertising is constantly experimenting with design and production methods. The general level of the public's taste and critical appraisal is being raised, and we feel that many organizations are not taking advantage of this. Printed materials which lack the brightness and modernity found in much current advertising cannot hope to compete for public attention.

It is quite a problem to have a quantity of text to illustrate or brighten up when you are limited by an economical printing size. Where it is possible, a successful method for designing a booklet or piece of printed material is this: lay out the cover and following pages roughly on layout paper, indicating art, photographs, color patterns, and type count. Then have the text and headlines written to fit the layout.

Today the trend in designing printed matter is toward space composition. You needn't fill every available area of white space with type. Simple cover designs which convey a single arresting message directed to a specified audience are most effective. Following up with easily readable text not less than 10 point in size, and a few photographs spread through the text will help keep the subject interesting throughout. It is possible to economize through the use of photographs instead of more costly drawings or art work. Many specialized photographs may be obtained, usually free of charge, from large corporations that use photographs in their national advertisements. You need give only a small credit line.

Good design requires care and taste in the selection of type. The two type faces specified for text in the majority of publications printed today are the Bodoni family and the Futura family. These two faces also have light, bold, italic and other styles to choose from for captions and headings. There are many other type faces

designed by various firms that closely resemble these two faces. Bodoni Book and Bodoni Regular are very easily read, as are Futura Medium, Airport, Vogue, etc. in a more modern face. There are a good many type styles to choose from for titles and headings where special emphasis is desired, but the same design factor of simplicity holds true for specifying heads and titles. A clean simple style of type, not too ornate or fancy, will tell the message best. Again we emphasize, make a survey of the various type faces used for text, titles and headings in direct mail advertising sent to your organization. This will stimulate your own interest in newer type styles.

Everyone is responsive to the proper use of color. If you are limited to one color for text and art, it need not always be black. You can use dark green, dark brown, bronze, blue, etc. By the use of a pastel paper and black ink you can produce new and attention-getting materials. We are certain that the attention received by the use of additional color justifies the cost. Reds, yellows, browns are attracting colors and should be used to demand attention. Blues, greens, grays are receding colors and can be used in backgrounds, panels and as secondary colors.

Design is a personal attitude that has to be developed over an endless pe:iod of time. Good taste in design is a nebulous thing acquired through attendance at graphic arts exhibits, reading of graphic arts trade publications, association with artisans and their work, and the trial and error method of your own efforts.

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6,000 VIVID WORDS

SUCCESSFUL public relations programs during the past quarter century have been built on happy marriages between the word and the photograph. The phrase that "A picture is worth 1,000 words" became trite Americana. Is this true? If so, what can local public relations' chairmen do to locate effective photos in their home communities?

For the answers, ADULT LEADERSHIP rang the doorbell of an apartment house on a hill overlooking Pittsburgh, Pa. There Roy E. Stryker maintains his workshop as photo-consultant to Jones & Laughlin Steel Corp. and the Farm Bureau Insurance Companies.

"Pictures don't stand alone," he contends. "Very few photos have ever been made that are worth a thousand words, without a few words of explanation. Most pictures are worthwhile in a public relations program

Here's universal emotional appeal of mother, baby and doctor. The mother's expression tells the story. You won't need many words to put across your message here. This is typical of the excellent photos obtainable through United Nations' Information Service.

Flat and overlighted as compared to contemporary magazine photography. Yet it is technically excellent and doesn't need many words to be identified as an Americanization class. This came from the files of the Pittsburgh Board of Education.

only when they complement written or spoken words.

"The essential value of the photograph is that it is our readiest vehicle of identification. Photos can be used for emotional appeal, for easy identification and as an additional form of words. It's pretty essential to keep those three factors in mind when selecting subject matter or finished photos for any type of public relations program, local or national."

"The four most logical sources for photos to be used in a local public relations program," he advised, "are (1) the local newspaper, (2) the Board of Education, (3) the public library and (4) the museum.

"Go look in their files and see whether they can fill your needs before you embark on any picture-taking junkets of your own. If all four of these fail you, try the local industries. One or more of them may be building a photographic library based on community relations as well as in-plant operations.

"Finally, try United Nations, the National Community Chest and national headquarters of your organization. Here you may get wide selections of splendid professional photos at low cost.

"Whatever your picture need, remember the three basics: emotional appeal, easy identification, and an additional form of words."

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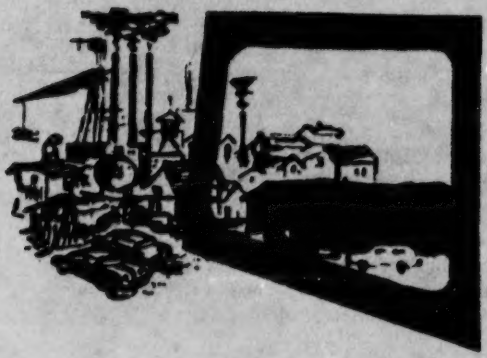
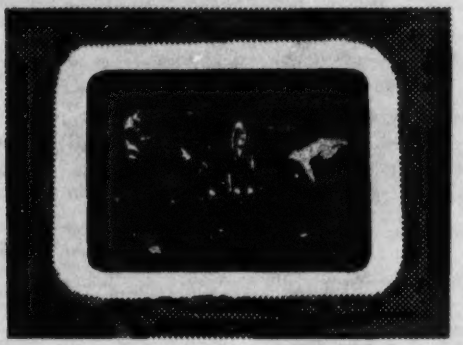


SLIDES TELL OUR STORY

We had told the story of our organization so many times that we were tired of it ourselves. True, we tried to add a special something to fit the needs of each new audience; but even so, material which had been live and exciting began to sound flat and prosaic because we felt that way about it ourselves.

We had a really live story to tell. It was about the Hyde Park-Kenwood Community Conference, a citizen organization on the southeast side of Chicago which is doing a unique job of involving neighbors in maintaining and improving a "middle-aged" housing area, and in building good human relations in an interracial neighborhood. The groups we talked to were very much interested in what we had to say: they hoped that they could use the Conference method to solve some of their problems, and to start them off on block projects such as providing a suitable place for their children to play.



First of all we tried to train new volunteers to become "interpreters" of the Conference program. As we worked with these people, we began to feel, more than ever, that we needed visual aids. If only we had a movie, we thought, so we could have a good balance of facts and graphic illustrations! We approached a foundation to ask for funds for such a movie. Our first approaches were unsuccessful, but even so we might have pursued the idea further—except that we hit on one which pleased us much more.

swinging into production

Mildred Mead, an active Conference member and skilled amateur photographer, had done work for other civic groups and produced a film slide show for one of these groups. It consisted of a series of 35mm slides accompanied by a running commentary—the sort of thing you might do in your living room if you came back from a vacation with pictures you wanted to share with friends. We knew that right within the community we could gather up enough pictures to have a passable production in a minimum of time. We could always have a flexible presentation which would grow as we were able to develop ideas or to get better pictures. We could use it, also, to train new volunteers who could in turn use the material and take it to other groups. The actual steps we took in working out our production were simple:

We made an outline of major points to include, then

put these points into a tentative chronology which would tell the Conference story. We checked this outline with staff and volunteers to be sure that we were not leaving out any essential ideas.

We gathered up all the color slides and black and white photographs of the community and community activities that we could find. A small committee spent one evening looking at these pictures and selecting those which best illustrated the ideas we wanted to get across.

Mrs. Mead used kodachrome film to photograph the black and white pictures; the result was a sepia-toned slide which could be alternated very successfully with color shots.

Some of the ideas we wanted to express could be portrayed best by cartoons. We found a volunteer cartoonist, and his colorful sketches added an amusing and fresh note to the finished production.

When our slides were ready, we sat down and looked at them on the screen, arranging them in the order of our original outline. As we looked at each picture, we "free-associated" ideas that might be used in a script.

"Block projects vary according to the problems neighbors want to work on. Here neighbors get together to clean up the street. City services are better than they used to be, but citizens have to help from time to time. The children often join in on these projects. Sometimes the clean-up means getting a vacant lot ready for a playground.

32

When slides and script were completed and fitted together we were ready for a preview.

testing and improving

We first presented the slide show to a group of people who were not familiar with our neighborhood, so that we could get some idea as to whether our story really communicated. The group responded favorably and we felt considerable pride. Both photographer and script writer, however, in viewing the show with an audience, had come up with several ideas for new pictures, rewrite, and reorganization of material. We were not at all satisfied with what we had said about some of the Conference committees. We sat down with people who were working on special projects, asked them to tell us the essential things they were doing which people ought to know about. These ideas were rewritten into the script,

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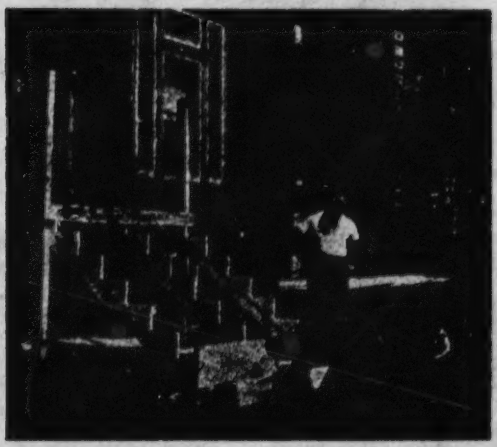
"Block leaders meet once a month for training and exchange of ideas. With 15 to 40 leaders attending these meetings, we usually spend part of the evening in small buzz groups working on special problems or hearing block reports.

pictures were added to illustrate them, and we were able to develop material which was more specific and alive.

During the next two months we showed the slides to several groups. Each time we found that we wanted to make a few changes! We had been using the show for almost three months before we were ready to say, "This is it!" In the meantime, while we were trying to make it a better production technically, we knew that we had been telling our story to a number of groups in a much better way than we had done before we attempted to use the slides.

We know, too, that although the slide show we have developed is our basic production, there will continue to be changes. The community itself is changing; new plans are being made for the area, and as these are developed into ideas which need to be graphically portrayed, these ideas will appear in our presentation.



"In some blocks, neighbors get together to work on property improvements: putting in new sidewalks, painting, planting lawns, or building new porches like the neighbors you see here.

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Public Relations or propaganda?

YOU might as well know what your opposition—some of it, anyway—keeps up its sleeve. In fact, for the success of your community public relations venture, *you'd better know.* Can you, for instance, tell the difference between a "hot potato" and a "big tent"? Keep reading.

A Community Chest drive, you may think, doesn't need strategy. It just requires dramatic interpretation. Just arouse the public! Show them the needs. Show them what the Chest funds will buy! And the public will surely give!

Regrettably, community public relations problems aren't that simple. Situations develop that demand skilled planning and the best available strategems.

How can we cope with an ambitious promoter or politician who establishes an agency in competition (actually but not nominally) with an existing agency? How can we handle a personal attack upon the professional ability or integrity of a tested and responsible staff member? What can we do when the owner of the only local newspaper becomes unsympathetic to crucial aspects of our program?

The point is worth remaking: To plan public relations adequately, it is essential to understand propaganda strategies which others might use against us, and to be prepared to use public relations strategies to counteract them.

In many cases, the propaganda (their) strategies employ the same techniques as the public relations (our) strategies. They are similar techniques used for different purposes and in different contexts. In fact, the notion that propaganda should be regarded in purely a negative sense is now recognized as a kind of propaganda itself.

To illustrate what I mean by strategies, I would like to outline and describe briefly the typical steps in a public relations or propaganda program and then to list and discuss briefly certain strategic techniques.*

Typical steps in a public relations or propaganda program—repeated over and over again in approximately this sequence are:

(a) fact-gathering
(b) definition
(c) case-making
(d) simplification
(e) development of strategy
(f) execution of the program

The fact-gathering forms the basis for an analysis and eventually a definition of the situation in which your agency finds itself. It should include checks upon the reactions of groups important to your agency's program. Case-making is the sort of thing an attorney does in preparing his materials for court. It is also what someone in every agency should do prior to a renewal of public relations efforts.

Once the agency's public relations situation is understood afresh and the facts and conclusions concerning it placed in order, then relatively simple summaries of the agency's case should be prepared. If possible, for convenience in interpretation, these summaries may be slogans. These statements will then become the theme or themes of the strategies developed and carried out in the execution of the program.

Three relatively common and dependable strategies are those which build upon (a) person-to-person communication, (b) a program of deeds, and (c) democratic leadership. Let us look at each one of these briefly:

Person-to-Person: The endless procession of quiz and other give-away programs on television and radio testifies not so much to acquisitiveness, as to the effectiveness of personal identification in public relations strategies. The genuineness of a fellow human being's needs, the efforts to satisfy those needs by answering a few questions, bring about a high degree of identification of lis-

*Adapted from A. M. and E. B. Lee's *The Fine Art of Propaganda* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1939) and A. M. Lee's *How To Understand Propaganda* (New York: Rinehart & Co., 1952).

tener with subject. Here are not the possessive mouthings of carefully trained announcers; here are folks just like us facing real problems and frequently solving them.

Program of Deeds: This is a series of events that dramatizes the cause, institution, movement, or person central to a public relations effort. Deeds can be faked or overrated, but deeds that bear the aura of genuineness have a spontaneity that is hard to create in a phony manner. A premium on believability has placed a high premium indeed on faking it. But the fake, and especially a series of fakes, seldom maintains itself through the rigors of popular checks and cross-checks—*unless it is in line with a myth that people feel desperately they must accept and believe.*

Democratic Leadership: Many community agencies have been damaged by autocratic leadership. In a democratic sense, a leader is not a person with a quality—whether given by training, experience, or mere appointment—which sets him aside and gives him the right to lead "common" mortals. In a democratic sense, a leader is a person sensitive to the direction a group or a community wants to go, and he or his agency becomes symbolic of a movement in that direction. One of the greatest dangers at any time to democracy is a leader who leads too successfully—who makes other's participation in decision-making unnecessary.

In addition to these three relatively common and dependable over-all strategies, there are a number of others community leaders need to know. These other strategies become important in struggles with unsympathetic or even destructive opponents. These strategies also become important in helping an agency to assert its needs and accomplishments in the increasingly complex competition of community propaganda.

Here is what all agencies actually face: The high-pressure struggle for our minds beats words and tactics into empty symbols and rituals. It wears out propaganda appeals. As a result, specialists probe ever deeper for new, and more telling ways to tap our motivations.

And now here is a list of strategies community leaders need to know in order to meet rough and tumble tactics.

Offense-Defense: As politicians realize, attack has many advantages over defense. Many appointed officials of governmental agencies spend far more time than they or the community can afford upon defensive efforts. As appointed officials, they can seldom seize the initiative in a struggle; but as community leaders, they can take the initiative away from unfair attackers of worthwhile governmental agencies. The same is true for independent organizations. This is achieved by a careful analysis of the situation in terms other than the attack, and then by a selection of a sound basis upon which the initiative may be seized.

Hot Potato is a popular term for making a "plant", and for the sort of thing implied in the question, "Have you stopped beating your wife?" It has been called the "propaganda of provocation." It is the springing of an event, a trap, a situation upon the opponent that will force him to compromise himself, to handle something in an embarrassed manner. The event, trap, or situation need not be fictitious or framed. From the standpoint of effectiveness, it is better if the propagandist makes skillful use of accurate facts, and especially of events and developments beyond his own control. *Hot Potato* depends for its effectiveness chiefly upon news value, timing, and interpretation.

Stalling is an old dependable. It involves in one manner or another a play for time. It is the use of plausible delaying tactics that may permit the opposition to lose vigor, interest, and support before a decision can be reached. In other words, when a politician, business executive, college president, or other leader is confronted with a question answerable only in ways offensive to powerful groups, a convenient way out is to appoint a "fact-finding" committee—order a "broad and impartial survey" of the subject.

Stalling takes many forms other than the appointment of committees. Consider "the proper sequence" or just "red tape." When a decision cannot be faced squarely, it is sometimes helpful to claim that that decision can only be made—formally at least—in "the proper sequence." In other words, it can be made only when it

is possible to get certain key people together in order to obtain their concurrence. Or when certain legal or ethical technicalities have been met.

Least-of-Evils frequently serves to justify an otherwise unattractive or even repulsive personality or course of action.

In this country, anti-minority agitators have often used this tactic to justify their extremist proposals. The segregationists in the recent litigation before the U.S. Supreme Court claimed that "separate but equal" treatment for Negro school pupils may not be equal, but it is the least-of-evils and hence the best practical course for Negroes and for the community. The anti-segregationists contended that unsegregated schools, even though they would present problems of assimilation, would be the wisest course whether viewed on its merits or as the least-of-evils.

Guilt and Virtue-by-Association and the closely related *Scapegoating* are techniques of disaster. They have frequently been discussed, and I will therefore not elaborate on them here.

Confusion: Aggressive social actionists know the value of the rapid exploitation of an apparently confusing situation. They rush through "emergency" measures, usually in a "heroic" or "self-sacrificing" way. "Something had to be done, and there was no time to take the matter up with anyone, so we did the best we could." They can then confront a public with even an outrageous *fait accompli* and many times get away with it. Among high pressure manipulators of organizations, this is—as they say in the armed forces—"standard operating procedure" or "S.O.P."

Big Lie . . . Censorship: It is a fairly tenable hypothesis that the more efficiently a community's public discussions are censored (controlled), the more the people come to regard such public discussions in the press, radio, and elsewhere as empty rituals divorced from the reality of flesh-and-blood situations. The big lie is a function of censorship. Either the term is a name-calling label, a way to denounce opposition propaganda, or it refers to a

baseless piece of propaganda that is repeated powerfully time and again in spite of its baselessness.

Conflict, Compromise: Conflict refers to the propaganda uses of strikes, lockouts, boycotts, picketings, shows of official force, riots, and wars. Depending upon your viewpoint, synonyms for compromise are appeasement and give-and-take and horse-trading.

Shift of Scene, Change of Pace: These two strategems are among the most confusing to amateurs in social action. Shifts of scene of a struggle are common in politics and government. Advertisers shift their emphasis from advertising medium to medium. Industrialists are prepared to shift their emphasis from sales drives to lobbies to courts to sources of materials. Trade unionists can shift from organizing drives to deals with management or with other unions, to lobbies and strikes.

Change of pace can be as useful as shift of scene. Sometimes they are used together. Both are ways of changing the terms of competition or conflict, of changing the basic public relations issue. Change of pace is to switch from slow to fast, from low-pressure to high-pressure, from bellicosity to appeasement, from emotional selling to factual reporting, or from a sponsored newscast to a musical program or radio or television.

Unvarnished Truth is something more than what ordinarily passes as truth telling. It is an effort to so present palatable and unpalatable facts that audiences will think your report to be completely down to earth.

Big Tent: For an organization to be large, with an extensive and varied constituency, it has to follow a big-tent type of strategem. Under the big tent in the Ringling Brothers-Barnum & Bailey Combined Circus, there are many attractions. They appeal to children, adults, the unmarried, the young married, the aged, the scientific, little girls, "tough" little boys, and the world-weary. And so, with modifications, it is with huge corporations, churches, unions, political parties, schools, and councils of social agencies.

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counter-attack

IT IS not uncommon for community groups to find themselves under attack. In a democracy anyone may question the policies and actions of all institutions. A major source of strength in a free society is freedom to dissent, to disagree, to question, to discuss.

Sometimes, however, dissent becomes dissension. Screaming headlines, vicious rumors, twice-told half-true tales—and just plain misunderstandings—can ruin a drive for funds or a plea for taxes, stop a sorely needed new program, force retrenchment in an old one, spoil the accumulated work of months or years, crucify respected workers and leaders—or crush even a well established community organization.

But institutions, whether they like it or not, must learn to endure such conditions and to perform efficiently under them. They must appreciate that public opinion plays a dominant role in our society. Any enterprise—social, industrial, professional or political—needs to develop competence in dealing intelligently with public opinion.

Particular situations demand particular solutions. There are, however, a number of considerations that organizations may use as guides to intelligent action. Some may point to ways of changing a distressing situation into a constructive, revitalizing experience.

POINT 1-Are the issues actually important? Or is the criticism of a kind that may better go unanswered? As

a general rule, a community group can seldom ignore criticism. In this connection consider:

First: The source. Is the source of criticism respectable and responsible? Or does it have a reputation for harping, fault-finding and trouble-making?

Second: The plausibility of the attack. If the attack appears unreasonable in the eyes of the general public, the element of implausibility may supply all the answer necessary.

Third: The prominence of the attack. It may have gained so little notice that public denial would only call attention to the charges.

Fourth: The nature of the attack. An important criticism (for example, that an adoption agency prevents adoptions) should not be ignored because it seems implausible or because only a few people have heard it. The risk of leaving misunderstandings is a serious one.

Fifth: The obligation of the organization. It is a mistake to assume that in an issue of importance to the public an organization is under no obligation to lay its cards on the table. In candor there is strength, and in unwillingness to be candid lies the possibility of damage —much more than people sometimes realize.

Sixth: Appearances. Refusal to answer a public charge implies to many that an organization is either guilty, or trying to put itself above criticism. Appearance and proof admittedly are two wholly different things; nevertheless, there is a great deal of truth in the axiom that "appearances count."

POINT 2-"Look before you leap." If your Civic Club is accused of misappropriating funds, a preliminary reply is possible, with an assurance that a full response will be made. This may be better than complete silence, and it will give needed time to get more information. A too hasty reply may cause self-inflicted damage. While it is essential to get the facts promptly, it is even better to have them beforehand, and often it is possible. Storms rarely come without warning.

POINT 3-Consider as objectively as possible what lies behind the charges. Maybe the Independent Voters has

become exclusively a women's club (or a men's). All organizations can and do make mistakes. Groups can get out of step with their communities. They can be too close to their own interests to see where weakness lies. One value of criticism is that it provides an opportunity for the correction of unsuspected faults.

To accept criticism and improve by it is one way in which an organization can win community respect. The public generally will be found pretty fair when it is informed. It is usually ready to give credit where credit is deserved. But if no action or correction is required, the public should be told why. It expects either correction or explanation.

POINT 4-In light of the facts, decide as a group what your position ought to be. Get agreement inside your organization before seeking understanding outside it. An attack raises doubts within the group. The parts of the organization may begin to pull away from one another under the stress of controversy. Maybe some members of your Farm Family Federation agree with those who have attacked your school program. The organization's position should be one which its own people can support. Criticism from outside is by no means automatically rejected by all groups within the family.

POINT 5-Tell your supporters and friends the facts and your position before any public statement is made, if you can. Those who are "in the family" deserve the truth and are interested in hearing it. Your own friends (other child welfare groups, other church groups, other civic groups) should be your most important source of support. They are far more likely to listen to you and to do something about your problem than those whose interest is merely casual.

It should be kept in mind that associated organizations may wonder whether they should defend you or stand on the sidelines. Supporters, financial or otherwise, may begin to feel uncomfortable.

Particularly after a surprise attack, a group should move to re-establish confidence. In times of emergency it needs the strength of unity. This is the time to rally

friends, associates and supporters. It is the time to seek public expressions of faith and renewed interest.

POINT 6-Attitude is important. It is difficult to resist the urge to make a hot rejoinder. There are times when righteous indignation is in order. The public itself may be angered by what it considers a reckless or malicious charge, and it may think more highly of the victim if he retorts with strong feeling instead of taking things lying down.

But remember that anger may stimulate and extend the controversy. It may lock an organization into an undesirable position from which it will be difficult to withdraw later. Hotheadedness makes it difficult to minimize the conflict and to re-establish peace. No matter what the facts may be, it is wise for your side not to endanger its good judgment by giving way to emotion.

POINT 7-Talk to your critics. Before entering a public battle, make sure that the critic himself hasn't some honest misconceptions which might govern his whole attitude. This may, indeed, not accomplish anything. On the other hand, it may; and if it does, the effort will have been highly worth while. In any event, it is a reasonable step to take just as early as possible. Before the controversy has gained much momentum, see whether the trouble cannot be cleared up at the source.

POINT 8-Use criticism as a constructive device. The attention of the public is extremely hard to get. And while the kind of attention that is brought about by criticism may not seem desirable, it may actually have great value. Should a Community Chest, for example, come under fire, it may use the attack on it to advantage. While answering the charges, it can help the public see more clearly the basic value of the organization and it can increase the public's appreciation of the services performed in its behalf. A few well-thought-out statements at such a time, particularly if accompanied by some action that portrays the real nature of the organization, can pay off. They may be noticed and remembered by people who

would pay no attention to columns of campaign publicity. Try to take advantage of criticism.

An organization's strongest defense against attack will always be an existing reservoir of good will. Any group in planning to answer criticism might do well to spend considerable time considering what it should be doing currently to build a positive position in the community. Every group has to work at the job of bringing regularly before the public its purposes, backing and accomplishments.

GUIDES TO ACTION

The first aim is to avoid letting a fire in the barn burn down both the barn and the house. Confine the conflict.

Good sense and an honest look at the facts will help. A fair discussion with the attacker may help. A pugnacious reply not only may not help but, on the contrary, may only toss a burning brand into the hay.

Do your best to treat the source of attack with fairness and with consideration of its point of view. Edmund Burke wrote: "Magnanimity in politics is not seldom the truest wisdom."

Speak out, but speak with the dignity that your organization hopes for from others and that will add to its own good name.

People close to the organization must get the facts of the case promptly. All concerned are entitled to the truth.

If controversy is unavoidable, then the object must be to unite all the people on your side behind an honest position. All the devices that can get the facts before friends should be used.

Take corrective action if needed. If none is needed. make clear why this is so. And if the conflagration cannot be avoided, its light may be used to illuminate the good services of the organization.

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Checklist for P.R. Planners

1. Public relations is important.

Unless we are clear about what we are trying to accomplish, and with whom, the temptation is to seek newspaper space whether newspaper space will help us or not; to go on the air at 10 in the morning when the most important audience for our particular story might be trade union members who are far away from their radio sets at that hour; to arrange large civic dinners with a lot of fanfare and expense when we might better reach our objectives by a series of quiet neighborhood meetings.

2. Our p.r. program is part of the whole.

If we forget this, we may send the public relations program down one street while the rest of the activities march down another. Imagine, for example, the public relations planners for a low-cost business girls' residence house describing the girls to prospective contributors as "lost and frightened in a big city" while other committees try to surround the house with an atmosphere worthy of dignified, capable young women who would be embarassed to be looked on as "lost and frightened."

3. P.r. planning is organization-wide.

Even though a small committee may be given the task of drafting a suggested plan, people at all levels in

our organization must be given the opportunity to make suggestions and adopt the plan as their own. Only in this way can everybody become an intelligent and effective "public relations ambassador."

4. Don't forget the "consumer's" point of view.

In planning a program aimed at strengthening relations with certain groups in our community, we should have participation from those groups. If our organization is trying to build better relations with the medical profession, for example, what better advisors could we have than doctors themselves?

5. Identify and face up to the facts.

Many an organization has wasted time and money aiming its public relations activities at the wrong targets —working to clear up "misunderstandings" which did not exist in the first place; assuming friendship and enthusiasm of groups that are actually indifferent. Only by getting at the facts can an economical, effective plan be built.

6. Publicity is only a part of our p.r. work.

Publicity media — newspapers, radio, television, printed matter, even sound trucks and sky-writing—are methods of attracting attention, creating impressions, and imparting information. But if our objective is to build a strong, convinced, enthusiastic constituency, the quality of our organization's *total* program is important. There must be a real need for its program, and, most important, there must be ways by which the public can really participate and not merely "listen to the story."

7. A good public relations plan is flexible.

Live organizations do not operate in self-made vacuums. They are part of a constantly shifting community scene. A sudden influx of population, the opening of new neighborhoods, changes in business conditions—these things and many more are reflected in our organization's activities. Otherwise, we may be meeting yesterday's needs, not today's.

A heaven-sent but unexpected opportunity to conduct a joint series of meetings with public school officials who

want to work with us, need not be turned down just because it "wasn't in the plan." An invitation to speak before a meeting of the Bar Association need not be declined just because we didn't think of it ourselves. It is only those sudden opportunities and ideas—even from our own committee—which would be so time-consuming as to make it impossible for us to carry out our important planned activities, that we may have to reject.

8. P.r. work needs evaluation.

Are the methods we are using to build relationships with certain groups really helping to build those relationships? What reaction did we get from that series of letters we sent teachers? Shall we carry on with our idea of approaching club presidents by letter, too? If the reaction from the teachers was unsatisfactory, was it something in the particular letter, or had we better choose another method entirely—a series of conferences, perhaps?

If we had certain ideas for newspaper articles, what success did we have in getting them printed; and, if they were printed, can we evaluate the results? Does our study seem to show lacks in our press relations; is the newspaper as good a method for our particular purpose as we had thought; if we did not get good coverage, was there something missing in the way we presented our story? Such evaluation will not only keep our current public relations program on the track toward the goal, but will in itself present a priceless opportunity for learning how to do a better job.

9. A good p.r. program is realistic.

Wise planners will remember that public attitudes are built slowly; that the road from indifference or passive acceptance to enthusiasm is a long one; that the road from hostility to friendship is even longer. We will, therefore, not expect to accomplish miracles in a day. We will make plans that are possible of fruition with the limitations of the personnel, facilities and funds which are at hand or obtainable. At the same time, we will not feel frustrated, because we will know that each step we are taking, however small, will lead us toward our ultimate goal—if we have agreed on a goal and if each activity is chosen with that goal in mind.

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INTRODUCING THE AEA

The AEA (Adult Education Association of the United States of America) is a non-profit organization founded in May, 1951, as an instrument for developing a united adult education movement. The general purposes of AEA, as stated in its Constitution, are:

—"To further the concept of adult education as a process continuing throughout life.

—"To promote and develop adult education in the United States by affording opportunities to professional and non-professional adult educators to increase their competence and by encouraging and assisting organizations and agencies . . . to develop adult education activities and to work together in the interests of adult education.

—"To receive and disseminate information about adult education.

—"To promote the balanced development of educational services for adult persons in the United States.

—"To cooperate with adult education agencies internationally."

United in the AEA to further these purposes through a program including field services, conferences, publications, and public relations, are over 12,000 men and women who work with adults in formal and informal educational and training programs. These leaders represent every sector of American society—education, labor, agriculture, industry, religion, social welfare, government service, and a host of voluntary associations.

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